

"IN THE BAG"

PFV West | CSA Week 10: Aug. 7, 2012

We anticipate the following choices at today's CSA pick-up (choices may differ depending on today's harvest):

- Basil -
- Chard or Sweet Potato Vines -
- Beets -
- Beans or Red Potatoes -
- Onions -
- Garlic -
- Squash and/or Cucumbers -
- Tomatoes -
- Melons -

Storage & Prep:

- **Basil** - unlike most, basil is fussy and will turn black in protest if it's too cold. Therefore, you'll want to snip the stems of the basil, then put it in a vase or glass with water. Leave it on the countertop, or the warmest part of the refrigerator (the door). Use this herb within 2-5 days.
- **Beets** - these purple little mamas pack two meals in one, as the root and greens attached are both edible, but this duality comes at a price. Beet greens won't last as long as the bulbs will, so aim to use beet greens within 5 days, and store them in the fridge. Otherwise, if you're not a greens fan, you can always lop off the greens and store the beet root itself for up to 5 weeks in the fridge.
- **Cucumbers** - although they're fickle to grow, they're easy to store! Just toss them in a crisper drawer in your fridge and they'll keep for 3-10 days.
- **Chard** - unlike other leafy greens, don't wash chard before storing it, as exposure to water will encourage it to go off. Place chard in a plastic storage bag (or reusable bag), wrap the bag tightly around the chard, squeezing as much air from the bag as possible, then place it in the fridge. Once in the fridge, the chard should last 5-7 days.
- **Leafy Greens** - most vegetables can be washed under cool (not cold) running water---leafy greens being the exception. Nothing ruins a meal more than biting into a mouthful of sandy, gritty greens. To properly wash greens and rid them of dirt: fill a large bowl or sink with cool water. Put the greens in the water and gently swish them around. Let them sit for a minute to let the dirt settle to the bottom. Lift the greens out of the water and place them in a colander to let the water drain. Do not pour the greens with the water into the colander as the grit that has settled to the bottom will only reintroduce itself back into the greens.

As a rule of thumb, greens should be washed and drained before storing the fridge. The longest shelf life for greens is had when greens are placed atop a paper towel (or reusable cloth) inside of a lidded container. Whole heads tend to

store longer and better than cut leaves. Kale and chard has a shelf life of 3-14 days.

- **Potatoes** - put potatoes in a cool, dry place that isn't too cold and is away from the light (keep beautifully in pantries or garages). Remember: **potatoes hate the fridge**; their starch will convert to sugar if they get too cold and will alter the way the potato will taste.
- **Onions** (fresh green & scallions) - unlike they're cured counterparts, you'll want to keep these fresh fellas in the fridge to extend their life. If you do so, they should last between 3-14 days. Keep an eye on their ends to determine their health.
- **Sweet Potato Vines** (see leafy greens)
- **Summer Squash** (includes zucchini) - these guys are happiest cool, but not too cold. Store them in the fridge for 3-10 days.
- **Tomatoes** - delicate as the day, you'll want to take great care when it comes to storing tomatoes. Because of their thin skins, especially the heirloom varieties, avoid stacking anything on top of these beautiful summer beauties. If your countertop allows, it's best to keep them loose and separated on a plate/platter until just soft on the shoulders. At this point they're ready to be eaten, otherwise place them in the fridge to extend their life by a few days. **Tomatoes really don't like the fridge**, as they'll soften in texture and taste, so you're best off eating them as soon as possible.

New (To Some) Items This Week:

- **Sweet Potato Vines** (also known as sweet potato vines and kamote tops) - you didn't know you could eat these, did you? These are exactly what they sound like -- the tops of the sweet potato plant -- a common green served in West Africa, Malaysia and the Philippines. It's not secret that sweet potatoes are little nutrient powerhouses, but their leaves are quite good too, as they contain some of the highest amounts of polyphenol (an antioxidant) in the vegetable world! They're also rich in Vitamins A, C and B2. Saute them, steam them, boil them or throw them in some soup!

Related Recipes

Caprese:

- Breakfast: [Caprese Eggs Benedict](#)
- Breakfast: [Tomato & Basil Omelette](#) (presentation is lovely, but no need to bother -- it's all about the taste!)
- Breakfast: [Caprese Egg Sandwich](#) (ignore the dill chives, and instead use **basil**)
- Breakfast: [Baked Eggs in Tomato Cups](#)
- Lunch: [Asian Caprese Salad](#)
- Lunch: [Caprese Panzanella](#) (could substitute **chard** for lettuce)

- Lunch: [Pan-Fried Lentil Caprese](#) (uses **garlic**; can substitute any nut/seed for the hazelnuts; calls for cherry tomatoes, but regular-sized tomatoes would work just fine)
- Lunch: [Caprese Salad w/ Cucumbers](#)
- Lunch: [Grilled Cheese -- Caprese-style](#)
- Dinner: [Pizza Margherita](#)
- Dinner: [Grilled & Stuffed Chicken Caprese](#)
- Dinner: [Tomato Walnut Basil Pasta](#) (dairy-free; uses **onion** & **garlic**; substitute spinach with **sweet potato vines**)
- Dinner: [Tomato & Basil Tart](#)
- Dinner: [Baked Caprese Rigatoni](#) - uses **onion** and **garlic** (very fast to make)
- Dinner: [Margherita Burgers](#) (could easily replace sun dried tomatoes w/ fresh ones)
- Dinner: [Fresh Tomato Tart w/ Basil-Garlic Crust](#)
- Party Food/Appetizer: [Caprese Verrines](#) (Mozzarella-Greek yogurt cream, basil emulsion, & tomato granita)

Other Deliciousness:

- Breakfast: [Tomato & Fresh Basil Frittata](#) (uses onion, garlic and any hue of basil will do here)
- Lunch: [Farro Salad w/ Romano Beans & Tomatoes](#) (uses **basil** & **garlic**; gluten/grain-free if you use quinoa or buckwheat groats instead of farro, and vegan if you pass on the goat cheese)
- Dinner: [Triple Tomato Risotto w/ Zucchini](#) (uses onion; can use **basil** for main herb)
- Dinner: [Penne w/ Beets & Tomatoes](#) (substitute **basil** for parsley and rosemary)
- Sweet: [A Light Chocolate Zucchini Bread](#) (gluten-free, dairy-free)

Sweet Potato Vines (these are the same recipes as last week, but feel free to substitute them in any recipe calling for cooked spinach):

- [Kamote Top Salad](#) (Ashley's favorite - a super easy, flavorful Filipino dish)
- [Takashi Inoue's Namul's Sweet Potato Leaves](#)
- [Kamote Leaves & Tomatoes](#)
- [Tilapia & Kamote Tops Stew](#)